



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FACT SHEET

MAYOR SANDERS OFFERS SAN DIEGANS CLASSROOM HELP FOR CREATING WATER-WISE RESIDENTIAL GARDENS

FREE SATURDAY CLASSES SET FOR FEBRUARY 23 AND MARCH 1

Mayor Jerry Sanders is continuing his effort to promote water conservation by offering free water-wise gardening workshops on February 23 and March 1. The workshops are geared to those who want to reduce the amount of water they use for outdoor irrigation. The Mayor is encouraging everyone interested in conserving water in their gardens to attend the free sessions.

SESSIONS WILL COVER ALL ASPECTS OF CREATING WATER-WISE GARDENS IN SAN DIEGO

The gardening classes are being co-sponsored by City of San Diego, San Diego County Water Authority and Metropolitan Water District and will give San Diegans a broad education in outdoor water usage. Each of the classes will cover:

Landscape Design Basics: This session will include an overview of landscape design principles; designing landscape as part of living spaces and information about how to develop a landscape plan that works best for San Diego homes.

California Friendly Plants: Information will be provided about the beautiful “California Friendly” plants that can save water in residential gardens and the “Nifty Fifty” list of low-water-use plants best suited for San Diego’s semi-arid climate.

Landscape Sprinkler Systems: Experts will cover the major design and maintenance principles of overhead sprinklers and drip irrigation systems and offer advice about choosing the best low-water flow option for residential use.

Soils, Watering and Fertilizers: Attendees will learn about how long sprinklers should run and how soils and fertilizers affect plant growth and watering needs.

The four-hour classes will be held on February 23 from 9AM to 1PM at the Montgomery Waller Recreation Center (3020 Coronado Ave., San Diego 92154) and March 1 from 10AM to 2PM at the Rancho Bernardo Library (17110 Bernardo Center Drive, San Diego 92128). Those interested in attending are asked to call Maureen Hall in the City’s Water Department at 619-533-4136.

EASY STEPS FOR ENDING OVER-IRRIGATION

Mayor Sanders continues to call on all San Diegans to end the over-irrigation of their yards. Over-irrigation wastes enough water each year to refill the Sweetwater Reservoir. Ending over-irrigation can help residents achieve substantial water savings outdoors where most of San Diego's water supplies are used.

Many homeowners are unaware of optimum watering cycles for their landscape and give plants more water than they need. Significant water savings can be achieved by simply adjusting sprinkler timers to match plant watering needs. There are several City programs that can help San Diegans determine optimum irrigation cycles including:

1. **Water Use Surveys** - Commercial and residential customers can call the City at (619) 570-1999 to request a survey. A trained professional will assess the current irrigation system, look for inefficiencies, and develop a customized irrigation schedule for homeowners. This service is provided free of charge.
2. **The Landscape Watering Calculator** – Homeowners interested in getting started on better irrigation practices immediately can log on to www.sandiego.gov/water and click on the Landscape Watering Calculator tab. This nationally recognized tool lets homeowners follow a few simple steps to develop a customized irrigation schedule for their yards.
3. **Weather-based irrigation Controllers** – These “smart” controllers automatically adjust run times as the season and daytime temperatures change, and shut irrigation systems during rainy days. The City of San Diego currently offers substantial rebates for these irrigation controllers. Call (619) 570-1999, or visit www.sandiego.gov/water for more information on the rebate program.
4. **The Commercial Landscape Incentive Program** – In addition to the “smart” controller rebated program, commercial landscape property owners can also avail themselves of incentives for other water efficient irrigation fixtures. Call (619) 570-1999, or visit www.sandiego.gov/water for more information on these incentives.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WATER-WISE GARDENING

To assist in selecting ‘California Friendly’ plants, the City of San Diego Water Department has worked with the Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College and others to develop a list of ‘Nifty Fifty’ plants particularly well suited to San Diego. These are non-invasive and generally available at local nurseries.

The Nifty Fifty list may be easily downloaded at <http://www.sandiego.gov/water /conservation>.

A complete listing of nurseries and addresses featuring water-wise plants may be found at the Water Conservation Garden's website at <http://www.thegarden.org>.

Located at Cuyamaca College, the 4½-acre Garden offers a variety of classes on many topics related to gardening and landscaping, for homeowners, children, and landscape professionals. It also has an extensive garden of ‘California Friendly’ plants, and a variety of exhibits about water-wise landscape design, maintenance, and irrigation. For more information, visit the Garden's website or call (619) 660-0614.